

God for the other countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and others which have been of assistance to these people. They have been driving out some of the more extremist element. We are working with the Russians to remove the chemical weapons.

In Syria today, Bashar al-Assad, from helicopters, is dropping these crude cluster bombs which are just shrapnel that kill anybody within lethal range. Since dropping it on populated areas, Bashar al-Assad has slaughtered innocent men, women, and children.

So here we are working with the Russians. Today there was a U.N. resolution from the Security Council condemning Bashar al-Assad's barbaric behavior. Guess who vetoed that. Our friends, the Russians. This is the most Orwellian situation in Iraq anybody has ever seen throughout history. Russians are working with us to remove chemical weapons from Syria and at the same time aircraft from Russia are landing full of weapons to kill Syrian men, women, and children. I am not sure a Syrian mother can differentiate between her child dying from a chemical weapon or dying from one of these cluster bombs that Bashar al-Assad is unloading from his helicopters.

So we have this grandiose idea the Secretary of State and the administration have been pushing for months and months to have a Geneva II. The first Geneva failed. Does anyone on God's green Earth believe that Bashar al-Assad, who is winning, is going to preside over his own transition from power? Of course not.

I will never forget—I am sure the Senator from South Carolina will never forget—the testimony of our now still Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta before the Armed Services Committee: Bashar al-Assad inevitably will leave.

The President of the United States: Bashar al-Assad, it is not a matter of when, it is not a matter of whether he will leave but a matter of when.

Meanwhile, the weapons pour in from Iran; Hezbollah, 5,000 of them; 130,000 people slaughtered, and one-quarter of the population being slaughtered, while this administration not only sits by and does nothing but the President of the United States says nothing.

This will go down as one of the most shameful chapters in American history. If the policy of this administration is to only focus on counterterrorism, get out of the Middle East, and remove any involvement of the United States in the Middle East, I can assure my colleagues the Middle East will not allow the United States of America to not be involved.

Mr. GRAHAM. If I may just conclude. I have a quote from Speaker BOEHNER, who said he would support the Obama administration if it decides to leave troops in Iraq beyond 2011.

I remember Senator Obama and Senator Clinton not being particularly

helpful to the mistakes made in Iraq during the Bush administration. In fact, the entire election in 2008 and the primary was about Iraq. I remember the politics of Candidate Barack Obama, who basically used the Iraq war to win the nomination, for lack of a better word. I remember during the campaign he talked about Afghanistan being a good war. We will talk about Afghanistan later. It is not a happy story either, I am afraid.

But the bottom line is that there was bipartisan support for troop presence beyond 2011, a residual force. This administration chose to ignore the advice of the commanders, and they created the situation where the Iraqis could not say yes. Yet they want history to record this being a problem created by the Iraqis for not giving legal immunity to U.S. soldiers. History is going to be written about our times. How this ends, nobody knows. But I know this: It is not fair to say that the reason we have nobody left behind in Iraq is because of the Iraqis. It is fair to say that the administration got the result they wanted, and they should own that—good, bad, or indifferent. Don't create a straw person for the situation that you drove and you created.

As to Syria, please understand that this whole conflict started when people went to the streets peacefully to ask for more political freedom after the uprising in Egypt; that this war in Syria did not start with a Sunni uprising or Al Qaeda invading the country. The conflict in Syria started when the people of Syria, from all walks of life, started demanding more from their government, from this dictatorship, and the response they received from their government was to use lethal force.

It has broken down now to a regional conflict where the Iranians are backing Assad and you have Sunni Arab States backing parts of the opposition and you have Al Qaeda types coming from Iraq and other places filling in the vacuum created by this breakdown in Syria.

At the end of the day, what Senator MCCAIN had been talking about for 3 years is that once you say Assad has to go—no President should say that unless they are willing to make it happen. Assad was on the ropes. With just any effort on our part, a no-fly zone to boots on the ground, any assistance at all in the last couple of years and Assad would be gone, the transition would be well underway. It would have been bloody at first, but we would have behind us now a Syria moving toward stability because the good news is the average Syrian is not a radical Al Qaeda Islamist. Syrians have been living peacefully with each other—Christians, Sunnis, and Alawites—for hundreds of years. Now Syria has become the central battle for every radical Islamist in the region, and it is just sad and sorry to witness.

But what does it mean to us? It means that if this war continues—our

friend the King of Jordan is under siege. The Lebanese Ambassador testified a couple of weeks ago in our committee that the country is saturated. Almost 1 million refugees from Syria have gone to Lebanon. There are over 5 million in Lebanon today. They have added almost 1 million refugees from Syria. They didn't plan to get to 5 million people until 2050. The Kingdom of Jordan—the Jordanians have received over 600,000 refugees, with no end in sight.

Syria is not a civil war. Syria is a regional conflict where you have proxies backing each side in Syria that are taking the entire region into chaos. It is killing Iraq. It is destabilizing Lebanon and Jordan. It has to be addressed in an effective way.

If you want to be President of the United States, certain requirements come with the job: having a vision, making tough calls at the time when it would matter. On President Obama's watch, you had the Arab spring come about and you had a desire by this administration to leave the region at any and all costs. Now you have absolute chaos. The only way we are going to fix this is for America to get reengaged. We do not need boots on the ground, but we need leadership.

It just breaks my heart to see how close we were in 2010. The surge did work in spite of opposition from President Obama as Senator and Secretary Clinton as Senator. In spite of their vehement opposition, the surge did work, and on their watch we are about to lose everything we fought for. Al Qaeda is the biggest beneficiary of our withdrawal from Iraq. Al Qaeda is the biggest beneficiary of our indifference in Syria. Al Qaeda is thriving, and our allies and our friends are in retreat.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, thank you for your patience.

We yield the floor.

## RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:35 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. HEITKAMP).

## MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate be in a period of morning business until 3 p.m. today, and that I be recognized at 3 p.m., with all other provisions of the previous order remaining in effect.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.